



**SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT
AND WORKFORCE**

EXTENDED BENEFITS STATUS REMINDER

As announced last week, The S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) has received notification from the US Department of Labor that, due to our low unemployment rate for the last three months,

SOUTH CAROLINA'S EXTENDED BENEFITS PROGRAM WILL TRIGGER OFF THE WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 12, 2020.

This means that when you file your weekly certification for week ending December 12, this will be the last Extended Benefits (EB) payment you receive.

EB is a program built to address sustained periods of high unemployment, and is available in South Carolina when the unemployment rate meets one of three conditions. South Carolina has remained on EB because it met the condition that its total unemployment rate for the most recent three consecutive months exceeded 6.5%. The federal government has notified South Carolina that it no longer meets any of the three conditions for EB because its total unemployment rate for the most recent three consecutive months has fallen below 6.5%. The parameters that define the beginning and end of EB are prescribed by state and federal law.

When the EB program is active, it provides up to 10 weeks of unemployment benefits for individuals who have exhausted regular state UI and, during COVID, the weeks of the federal Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) program.

ARE THERE OTHER BENEFITS PROGRAMS?

Some claimants may be eligible for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) if you have received less than 39 weeks of benefits under the regular state unemployment and EB programs combined. 39 weeks is the total number of weeks of the PUA program and any weeks earned through other programs count toward that total. Benefits received as part of the PEUC program are not included as part of the 39 weeks.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM ELIGIBLE FOR PUA?

PUA is, in part, for individuals who are unemployed and not eligible for any other program and whose loss of work is COVID-19 related. If a link appears on the *Customer Menu* of the MyBenefits portal, you

THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN SOUTH CAROLINA:

August – 6.4%

September – 5.2%

October – 4.2%

Three-month average – 5.3%

5.3% is below the minimal rate required for EB.

The unemployment rate is estimated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) monthly based on several factors, including a national household survey, employer staffing reports, and claims information submitted by the state of South Carolina. By BLS definition, for an individual to be counted as unemployed, they must be out of work and actively seeking work during the last four weeks. While the number of unemployment claims received by DEW is a factor in the unemployment rate, the primary driver of the final number is a monthly survey of households requesting employment information for the week containing the 12th of the month.

can file for PUA or, if you have already filed for PUA in the system, just continue to file your weekly certifications. You will notice that the questions for PUA weekly certifications will be different than the questions for the other programs because they include PUA-specific questions pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic and your unemployment.

HOW MANY WEEKS OF PUA ARE AVAILABLE?

The maximum number of PUA weeks for which a person could be eligible is 39; however, those who have already been filing and receiving benefits for regular state unemployment or other federal programs, excluding PEUC, must count those weeks in the 39 total weeks available. For example, if you received 26 weeks of state unemployment and only 3 of the 10 weeks of EB, you could be eligible for weeks of PUA. However, please keep in mind that all federal programs, including PUA, expire in December. The last claim week for which you could be paid is claim week ending December 26, 2020.

WHEN DO THE OTHER FEDERAL PROGRAMS END?

PEUC and PUA are available for claim weeks that end on or before December 31, 2020. Claim weeks in South Carolina end on Saturdays. This means that the last claim week South Carolina can pay these benefits is for the week ending December 26, 2020. Once you exhaust the maximum weeks for these programs or the December 26 claim week has passed, there are no additional federal unemployment benefits weeks available.

Federal programs can only be extended by federal legislation. DEW does not control the extension of these programs.

Claimants on regular state UI will continue to receive their weekly benefit amount for weeks they are found eligible. By South Carolina law, the maximum weeks for state UI is 20 weeks.

IS IT POSSIBLE THAT THE FEDERAL PROGRAMS COULD BE EXTENDED?

Federal programs can only be extended by federal legislation. DEW does not control the extension of these programs.

WHAT RESOURCES DO I HAVE TO HELP ME FIND A JOB?

While our agency administers the unemployment insurance programs, we are also here to help you with reemployment. During this challenging time, our workforce staff is prepared to help you. Visit scworks.org to find an SC Works center in your area. The SC Works system is staffed with professionals connected with local employers who can help you find employment.

You can also search for work and apply for jobs at SC Works Online Services (SCWOS) at jobs.scworks.org. There are more than 79,000 open jobs across the state, and we want to help job seekers connect with employers ready to hire. SCWOS is a free online resource where individuals can create a free account, search for and apply for jobs, create a resume, search training and education opportunities and explore in-demand industries.